

The original documents are located in Box 38, “9/7/76 - Remarks Upon Signing S. 3542: Teton Dam Disaster Assistance Bill” of the President’s Speeches and Statements: Reading Copies at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

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THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN....

SIGNING CEREMONY FOR THE TETON DAM RELIEF LEGISLATION

SEPTEMBER 7, 1976

NO GOVERNMENT HAS THE POWER TO ELIMINATE
TRAGEDY FROM HUMAN EXPERIENCE. BUT GOVERNMENT CAN --
AND SHOULD -- ACT QUICKLY TO MINIMIZE THE PAIN OF A
GREAT DISASTER AND HELP TO BEGIN THE HEALING PROCESS.

ON THE MORNING OF JUNE 5TH, 1976, THE TETON DAM
IN EASTERN IDAHO RUPTURED, AND THE ~~RESULTING~~ FLOOD WATERS
CARRIED DEATH AND DESTRUCTION TO THOUSANDS OF FAMILIES
IN THE SNAKE RIVER VALLEY.

THE NEXT DAY, AFTER CONFERRING WITH GOVERNOR
ANDRUS, I DECLARED THE AFFECTED COUNTIES TO BE A FEDERAL
DISASTER AREA, AND EMERGENCY RELIEF CENTERS WERE QUICKLY
ESTABLISHED TO PROVIDE ASSISTANCE TO VICTIMS.

FIVE DAYS LATER, I SUBMITTED TO CONGRESS LEGISLATION
APPROPRIATING 200 MILLION DOLLARS FOR COMPENSATION OF
THE VICTIMS OF THIS CATASTROPHE. WITHIN TEN DAYS
FOLLOWING THE FLOOD, SPECIAL OFFICES WERE OPERATING IN
IDAHO TO HANDLE DAMAGE CLAIMS.

TODAY I AM SIGNING A BILL WHICH PROVIDES
LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY FOR ~~THIS~~ COMPENSATION OF PERSONAL
AND PROPERTY DAMAGE SUSTAINED BY VICTIMS OF THE FLOOD.
MANY OF THESE CLAIMS HAVE ALREADY BEEN SETTLED AND THE
MONEY IS NOW AT WORK REBUILDING THE LIVES OF THE
SURVIVORS. THE LEGISLATION WHICH I SIGN TODAY INSURES
THAT THIS VITAL AID WILL CONTINUE.

LET ME THANK THE MEMBERS OF CONGRESS FOR THEIR
STRONG BIPARTISAN SUPPORT OF THIS MEASURE.

I KNOW

HOW HARD THE IDAHO DELEGATION WORKED ON IT.

CREDIT MUST ALSO BE GIVEN TO THE MANY VOLUNTEER AND
CHURCH GROUPS REPRESENTED HERE TODAY WHICH PLAYED
SUCH A KEY ROLE IN THE INITIAL RELIEF EFFORTS. EACH
OF THEM DISPLAYED GREAT COURAGE UNDER EXCEPTIONALLY
DIFFICULT CONDITIONS.

TOGETHER, THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTORS
OF AMERICA HAVE EXTENDED TO THE VICTIMS NOT JUST OUR
SYMPATHY, BUT A STRONG AND STEADY HELPING HAND.
END OF TEXT